



ALBUQUERQUE BIOPARK BIOVAN RANGER

BIOPARK EDUCATION VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION 2010

PURPOSE

The BioVan is an outreach program available free of charge to Albuquerque-area elementary schools. Funded by the BioPark Society, the program's mission is to introduce the biological diversity sustained by the Rio Grande, create an awareness of the interdependence of life, and encourage actions that protect and conserve our environment. The BioVan's traveling exhibits include live animals and plants, biological artifacts ("BioFacts"), interactive games and art activities. As a follow-up to the BioVan school visit, the program includes a hands-on field trip to the Rio Grande Bosque. This "Rio Ranger Field Hike" acquaints students with local habitat, ecosystem and real-time conservation through field and laboratory activities, and interactive arts.

BioVan Rangers enable the BioVan to fulfill its mission by teaching during school visits and hikes through the Bosque. Rangers bring a personal, friendly touch to thousands of students each year and are an integral part of the BioVan program.

REQUIREMENTS

Anyone of 18 years or older may become a BioVan Ranger. Rangers must be willing to work with children and adults at schools and science fairs. Rangers must be flexible, patient, cooperative, and committed to teaching conservation in a variety of settings. The knowledge required to become a successful Ranger is taught at workshops hosted by the BioVan staff and can also be learned on the job. The BioVan staff is always on-site during events to answer questions. As a safety precaution, all applicants are required to submit to a City of Albuquerque background check before they can begin volunteering.

DUTIES

Rangers choose which events to work. After signing up to teach at a local school or lead a field hike, the staff contacts Rangers to arrange a meeting place and time. A Ranger may volunteer for a full or half day. Schools are in Albuquerque or Rio Rancho, and field hikes leave from the Albuquerque Aquarium.

While at an event, Rangers teach about the journey of the Rio Grande from the San Juan Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico. Lessons directly relate to the BioVan's five exhibits, which depict habitats along the river. Rangers assist staff in monitoring the health and well-being of BioVan animals, directing interactive games, and maintaining the exhibits. School visits are usually scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

While leading field hikes through the Bosque, Rangers help children identify plants and signs of animals (tracks, scat, etc.), assist with field and lab activities, and teach conservation. Rangers must maintain friendly communication with students, teachers, and chaperones while giving directions and keeping the group safely together. Hikes are generally scheduled on Fridays from 9:30am-1:00pm.

MINIMUM TIME

Rangers create their own schedules. They may work any time the BioVan program is in operation—typically Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

A minimum of 60 hours a year is required to receive recognition as a BioPark Education Volunteer. At least 30 hours of these must be spent directly working as a BioVan Ranger; the remaining 30 hours may also be spent directly working as BioVan Ranger or doing support work such as research, writing, attending monthly meetings, continuing education classes and Brown Bags, assisting with general BioPark projects, etc. Volunteers are responsible for tracking their own hours on an honor system.

If a BioVan Ranger is active in another BioPark Education Volunteer program, the minimum number of required hours does not increase. The total of 60 hours may be divided between both or all jobs.

TRAINING

Applicants wishing to join the BioVan Rangers are encouraged to attend a training workshop. New Rangers may also train on-the-job while shadowing seasoned volunteers. All new Rangers will receive the BioVan Ranger Guidebook which contains information necessary to successfully teach the conservation-themed lessons of the BioVan program. New Rangers will learn about ecosystems surrounding the Rio Grande, the biology of specific plants and animals, and up-to-date conservation issues affecting our endangered river and the occupants of its habitats.

UNIFORM

BioVan Rangers wear a khaki uniform vest, which is borrowed from the BioVan staff. A nametag will also be provided. Volunteers are responsible for acquiring solid-colored clothing (blouse/shirt and pants/skirt/shorts) in uniform colors to wear with the vest. Uniform colors are black, brown, beige or white—jeans are unacceptable. Comfortable shoes are a must for Rio Ranger Field Hikes.

BENEFITS

BioPark Education Volunteers have the opportunity to do meaningful and gratifying education work with thousands of visitors to the BioPark, an important intangible benefit. Tangible benefits are also available. Upon completion of the training and a commitment to give the minimum number of hours, BioPark Education Volunteers receive an identification badge, which allows free regular admission to all BioPark facilities (Zoo, Aquarium, and Botanic Garden). While on duty, volunteers receive a discount at the food and gift concession stands. After the end of each calendar year, volunteers are awarded recognition items for their service. Volunteers are offered discounts to all fee-based BioPark Education programs and are invited to special volunteer-only events.

SUPPORT

Resources exist throughout the BioPark to help volunteers fulfill their duties. Education staff can provide assistance, and small Education Libraries are available. Monthly education meetings are generally held on the first Thursday and first Saturday of each month, and all volunteers are encouraged to attend. The Zoo meetings are at 9:00am in the Zoo Ed Barn. The Aquarium/Botanic Garden meetings are at 11:00am in the AQ/BG Education Building. Current BioPark happenings and facility-specific information are discussed. BioVan and Tingley Beach topics are covered at both meetings. Volunteers are also invited to attend monthly Brown Bag

Seminars following the meetings. Mid-month, a written update is mailed to all BioPark volunteers which contains upcoming BioVan program events. Information on current happenings is also available in the Volunteer Communication Room at the AQ/BG Education Building or on the bulletin board in the Education Barn.

COSTS

BioPark Education Volunteers are responsible for purchasing their nametag and acquiring their own uniform clothing.

STRUCTURE

BioVan Rangers report to the BioVan Facilitator, Kate Trainor (505-764-6288). Ms. Trainor reports to the Interim BioPark Education Curator, Allyson Zahm. The Environmental Educator, Amanda Jones (505-764-6242), Teaching artist Sue Orchant, AQ/BG Education Clerk, Lee Ann Rivera, Zoo Education Clerk, Lori Powdrell, and the Zoo-to-You Program Specialist, Randy Pedro, are also available to provide assistance.

HOW TO APPLY

Fill out the BioVan Ranger application and contract release forms, and return to Albuquerque BioPark Education, Attn: Lori Powdrell, 903 Tenth Street SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102. Once your application is received, you will be asked to complete a separate background check form.

CONTACT

For more information, contact BioPark Education:
(505) 764-6288, ktrainor@cabq.gov
www.cabq.gov/biopark



The BioPark is a division of the City of Albuquerque's Cultural Services Department.
For general inquiries, please call 311 (NM Relay or 711).